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The Musket

LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL'S STUDENT-RUN NEWSPAPER SINCE 1969

Page 5
Lexington High School's chapter of Sources of Strength repaints the color wheel in the middle of the quad.

Page 8
Check out Arts and Entertainment Editor Narek Sahakian's latest comic.

Volume LXI Issue II—November 2018

Michael Dukakis comes to LHS

Bella Gharabegian
Ollie Rourke
Staff Writers

Michael Dukakis, former governor of Massachusetts and 1988 presidential candidate, recently visited Lexington High School. Dukakis served as governor from 1975-1979 and 1983-1991, and was the Democratic candidate in the 1988 presidential election when he lost to George H. W. Bush.

"In my mind he's still frozen as the guy from the 1980s," Larry David, a U.S. History and U.S. Government and Politics teacher at LHS, said. "It's not every day that you get someone who's a former governor and candidate for the highest office in our country to come in and speak."

In the library media center, Dukakis gave a speech and then fielded questions from the crowd, which was mainly composed of social studies classes. Dukakis described his career as the longest serving governor in Massachusetts history. He noted that corruption posed a challenge early in his term.

Dukakis emphasized that the biggest challenge facing Massachusetts currently is public transportation, particularly in Boston.

"In a few years, things will be completely jammed," Dukakis said. He supports the construction of The North–South Rail Link, a proposed pair of rail tunnels that would connect North Station and South Station in downtown Boston.

Dukakis also encouraged students to consider pursuing a career in public service.

"He stressed the importance of public service, which he said was very rewarding, but financially modest," David said.

Dukakis also noted his fiscal accomplishments; he discussed how he revitalized the economy during a period of slow growth.

"He was really passionate about civic engagement," Luke Eriksson, a senior in David's U.S. Government and Politics class who attended the speech, said. "He was quite proud of his tenure as governor. His best quality was his ability to garner bipartisan support and communicate with politicians across the aisle."

"I thought he was very entertaining and he had a good message. You always have to worry about any political aims or biases, but it was definitely worthwhile," David said.

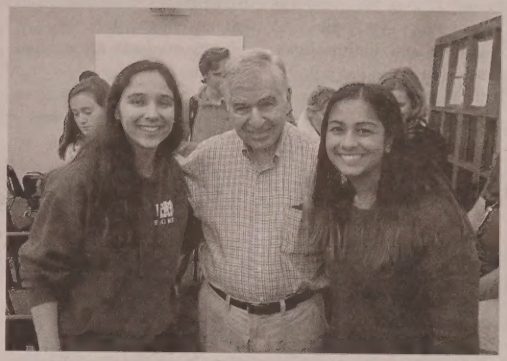


Photo courtesy of Michael Egbert
Former Mass. Governor Michael Dukakis is pictured with Editor-in-Chief Talia Blatt and photographer Megha Prasad

Anti-semitic graffiti is found in school bathrooms

Victor Chen
Vibhuti Naik
Staff Writers

On Oct. 4, a swastika graffito was discovered in a bathroom stall at Lexington High School. School administrators immediately contacted the police to investigate the situation. The Superintendent of schools, Dr. Julie Hackett, also consulted the the Human Rights Commission.

The graffito was one of a series of anti-semitic and hateful incidents dating back to last year.

Principal Stephens addressed the incident through a newsletter sent to students and parents.

"We are about the provision of a safe, kind, supportive, and inclusive environment that conveys that every single student here matters and deserves to be here. These incidents of graffiti convey the polar opposite of those core beliefs and I hope that, instead, they further galvanize our collective ideals against such actions and help to bring us together," he said.

Students have also voiced their concerns about such incidents.

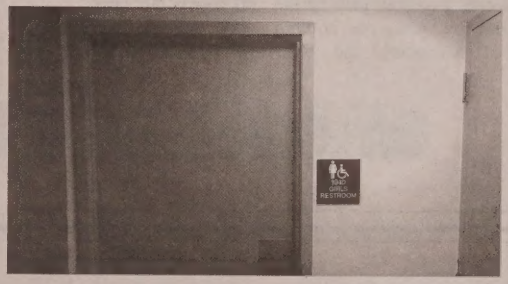
"Our school is very diverse, filled with people of different backgrounds. It is important to build a welcoming community for all individuals. However, these hate symbols [keep] us [from] accomplishing that goal," Jonathan Hsu, a junior, said.

Nonetheless, Hsu remains optimistic.

"I think overall our school and most people in it are striving for a better community... I often hear my peers discussing recent political and social issues, which demonstrate their care and awareness for these problems and their wishes to solve these problems," Hsu said.

Sophomore Jack Man shared a similar sentiment.

"Our nation is more divided than ever, but that doesn't mean we can't make our school a safe and harmonious space for all. We should not be affected by the hate crimes around us and work toward a better future," Man said.



Staff photo by Talia Blatt
The graffito was found in a bathroom stall.

Hi all!

We're introducing more new content - a Behind the Scenes series, in which we feature often underrecognized members of LHS, and a Breaking Boundaries series, in which we feature students and groups who are moving against stereotypes and barriers.

As always, we want to know what you want to know, so please contact us if you have story ideas, questions, or thoughts.

Also, please give our fall playlist a listen, and keep your heads up! We're a quarter of the way there.

Best,
Talia and Rebecca

Proposed schedule changes will reduce student stress levels

On Tuesday Oct. 30, the School Committee voted to delay Lexington High School's start times from 7:45 to 8:30 a.m. The decision was made after months of discussion surrounding the relationship between early start times and student stress levels.

"Adequate sleep is essential for the health and wellbeing of teenagers, and with a first bell at 7:45, we are asking our high school students to fight their own bodies and be awake and highly functional... much too early in the day," Kathleen Lenihan, a member of the School Committee, said.

Even 45 minutes can make a difference to high school students, who often stay up late to complete homework or study for assessments.

"We know that adolescents, in general, are biologically hard wired to go to sleep no earlier than 11 p.m. and wake up around 8 a.m.," Lenihan said. "This is due to the normal shifts in circadian rhythm that accompany puberty."

Many students are excited about the change.

"I'll have more time to sleep and relax in the morning if we start a bit later," Sachiv Chakravarti, a junior, said. "Right now getting ready for school makes me wake up earlier than I want."

Student athletes are also enthusiastic about the later start times, even if it intervenes with practice schedules.

"It'll be great to get more sleep," Micah Benson, a junior, said. "We already start track practice at 3:15 p.m. so we can delay it a bit and still have enough light out to run."

There are important downsides to acknowledge. If the high school gets out later than middle schools, clubs like Model UN and Diamond Debate Club, which are run by high school students, might no longer be feasible.

"I'm afraid that kids will miss the opportunity to learn to speak their minds and bond with kids they don't normally talk to over debate—it's the place where I found my friends in middle school, and holds some of my funniest memories," Caroline Li, a junior and teaching assistant at Diamond Debate Club, said.

Overall, however, this is a step in the right direction. We've seen a succession of insufficient stress reduction efforts, which failed because they treated symptoms, not causes. Coping activities like rock decorating and quad painting have their place, but they won't counter a culture of exhaustion and all-nighters. It is invigorating to see the School Committee combat structural causes of stress, rather than supply band-aid solutions. Hopefully, future changes will further this trend.

Collegebored - Counting down the days...

■ Jeffrey Gu
Columnist

Time moves so quickly. Autumn is here already, quarter one is over, and Jan. 1 is creeping up on us. Soon we'll be done with college apps, it'll be second semester, and we're home free!

Heck, some of you have already turned in early applications – congratulations! For those of you who didn't choose to "early" anywhere – that's ok too! We're all moving at our own pace through this little hellhole of a time called semester one, and wherever you are in the process, you're doing great. Juggling senior coursework and deciding on your path for the next four years can be hard and frustrating and painful, and you've been doing amazing up until now. Hang in there for just a few more weeks!

Even as we await the arrival of second semester, though, we can't let senioritis set in quite yet. It's important to plan ahead for the applications we have left to do. Writing things late isn't any fun, and is often very unfun, if not downright awful. For instance, I'm writing this month's column like I wrote my early application essays – right up against the deadline. (A little over it, actually. Forgive me, editors.)

As stressful as this is, I imagine that writing ten essays on December 31st is even more stressful, in addition to being a horrible way to close off your winter break.

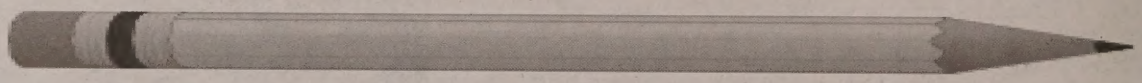
So don't do that! (Or if you already did that for your earlies – learn from it!) Map out any essays you have left to write, and come up with a schedule for completing them, including every step in the process: brainstorming, drafting, revising, revising again.

More importantly, hold yourself accountable and stick to it – even if you don't feel like you have the perfect product by the deadline you've set for yourself, at least you'll have something you can go back to and edit later instead of having to throw a bunch of haphazard sentences together a few hours before the actual deadline. You're being asked to condense as much as you can about yourself into a few hundred words. Save time to give it the thought it deserves.

And don't forget to schedule in time to relax! Be realistic here – writing a strong essay, no matter the length, is something that takes a lot of effort. You're not about to turn into an essay-writing machine and work 24/7 to pump these out. While leaving all your essays until the last minute is a bad idea, wasting your last fall in high school is equally bad. As you set aside time to write about "a time of hardship that you overcame and learned from" or "an experience that demonstrates your character," be sure to also leave time for enjoying this fall weather.

Balance is important – the college application process can be stressful, but it doesn't have to be overwhelming. Remember, you're almost at the finish line! By the time the next issue of The Musket comes out, you'll have submitted all your applications, and won't ever have to log into Naviance, the Common Application website, or any other admissions-related website ever again. You've already come so far – finish strong!

The leaves are changing color, pumpkin spice lattes are in season, and the holidays are closing in quick. In a few short weeks, we'll be turning in the last of our apps, and a few months after that, we'll be parting ways and heading out on our own separate paths. You'll be okay wherever you go for college, but you won't ever get this period of your life back. So even though your essays are important, make sure you take some time to step outside, laugh with your friends, and enjoy life.



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LHS students should register to vote for future elections

Samiha Kazi
Shashwati Sanjay
Staff Writers

The midterms are over, but Lexington High School students should continue to pre-register to vote.

All people aspire to live in a world in which they can make their own decisions. One of the most important decisions is choosing political leadership, a decision American citizens are lucky to be in a position to make. Registering to vote is a necessary step for citizens to take in order to make political decisions. Unfortunately, many Americans do not exercise their right to vote, often because they don't register.

"I think that pre-registering to vote is an action that all adolescents should take. It prepares us to use our voice once we finally become of age, and reminds us that we can still make a difference," Angela Lai, a junior, said.

Some people think registering is just inconvenient. In fact, data shows that there has been a decrease in the number of people ages 18 to 34 who voted since the last time the census was taken in 2012. Meanwhile, the number of voters ages 45 to 64 and older has increased.

"I know that a lot of kids our age haven't pre-registered to vote yet," Jason Dai, a junior, said. "And I think it's because they don't feel like it is necessary since we technically are not allowed to vote until later. But I think pre-registering is important because it shows that young people are ready to leave an impact in the future."

When people don't pre-register to vote because they are too young, they often never register. And registration is a prerequisite to boosting voting percentages for young people. "Get out the vote" movements only work with eligible voters.

Staff photo by Kelly Hui
Editor-in-Chief Talia Blatt sports socks promoting voter participation.

Yes, the midterms are over. But we shouldn't wait until 2020 to remind ourselves that pre-registration is agency-affirming and important. Regardless of political ideology and age, we should all be proud to exercise this civic duty.

Did Mass. voters make the right decision on Question 1?

Tony Sjodin
Staff Writer
Alex Tang
Columnist

As we reflect on the national effects of the U.S. midterm elections, The Musket is taking a look at decisions made closer to home. Massachusetts recently voted down Ballot Question 1, which would have placed a limit on the number of patients a nurse can have. Two of our writers, Tony and Alex, discuss the implications of that decision.

We should have said yes!

A "yes" vote for this ballot question would have had a positive impact on both patient care and working conditions for nurses.

High nurse workloads actively worsen patient care. A study conducted by a variety of nursing schools and affiliated organizations found that the likelihood of a patient surviving cardiac arrest decreases by five percent for each patient added to a nurse's workload. A patient limit would have saved lives.

Similarly, another study found that for each additional child patient added to a nurse, the likelihood of the child's readmission to the facility for common conditions increased by 11 percent. For basic surgeries, this rate skyrockets to 48 percent. This should matter more than cost: a patient's well-being comes before the profitability of a hospital.

Additionally, nurses face impossible burdens. With growing nursing shortages, especially in rural areas, nurses have simply been asked to take on too much. A universal limit was the only way to force hospitals to hire more nurses, mitigating some of the strain on current nurses.

The ballot measure received approval from students at LHS.

"The ballot is the only effective way to improve patient care," Angelique Pham, a sophomore, said.

If hospitals truly prioritized their patients over their bottom line, the ballot would have been implemented.

We made the right call!

Although the "yes" campaign raised valid concerns about the current system, a "one-size-fits-all" change was never the solution.

Question 1 was the most expensive ballot initiative this fall. Several studies done by the Massachusetts Health Policy Commission indicate that the initiative would have cost between $674 to $946 million dollars each year. State and federally funded health programs would have seen dramatic increases in operating costs, a change that would have the greatest impact on hospitals with patients on Medicare and Medicaid.

"Economically speaking, nurses benefit greatly if you were to answer yes because the demand for nurses would increase and therefore their wages will increase. However, as time goes by, wages will return to normal, but there will just be more people in the market. If you say no, it's more beneficial for everyone else," Sean Wu, a senior and first-time voter, said, before the election.

Even if there were an increase in the quality of patient care, the initiative would have caused closures in small hospitals throughout the state.

"My mom is a doctor. Small hospitals would close with lack of patients and this would be dangerous for people who need emergency care," Isaac Ostrow, a freshman, said.

Proponents of Question 1 argued that its implementation would increase patient safety and quality of care. But research on the topic from California, in which mandatory nurse-to-patient ratios were implemented in 2004, is inconclusive. Hospital workers have reported little noticeable improvement in the quality of care that patients receive.

Calif. legislation differs in that it imposes less strict ratios, whereas the proposed legislation in Mass. had inflexible ratios created without the input of state officials.

As the No on 1 campaign coalition said, "While improvements can always be made, this ballot question is the wrong prescription for patients and would force dramatic cutbacks across our entire healthcare system."

Should Lexington High School limit its number of clubs?

Katya Ivanenko
Ashna Mitta
Staff Writers

Lexington High School has an incredible number of clubs. Two of our writers, Ashna and Katya, discuss the benefits and disadvantages of so many options.

Too many clubs!

Students and staff may wonder why there are so many clubs at Lexington High School, especially because many of these clubs don't have a lot of exposure or many members.

Competition between clubs at LHS is intense. With so many groups, energy is dispersed, making it difficult for each individual club to successfully run large events.

There's also a bit of a fake club epidemic, in which students join or even create clubs they have no intention of substantively engaging with, just to pad their college applications — a task made ridiculously easy by lenient club policies.

A limit on the number of clubs would encourage smaller clubs with similar ideas to merge, forming bigger, more impactful student groups.

"If the club only gets a couple people showing up and they do nothing to further develop the club, the club should be dissolved," Zainah Islam, a sophomore, said.

Bring on the clubs!

Each student should have the option to join whatever club they feel benefits them the most. If they really want to share something with the whole school, they should be able to make a club and share that.

"I think that having a lot of clubs at LHS is actually a good aspect of our school because [it] gives everyone an opportunity to find one that they enjoy. I love doing clubs at school because we help and impact others in such a positive and fulfilling way, and I get to meet so many new people," Angela Lai, a junior, said.

Although the status quo is a little chaotic, the alternative would be far worse: club merit would be a popularity contest, with the biggest clubs considered more legitimate than clubs with lower but potentially more passionate memberships.

LHS has many clubs because of our diverse range of talents, passions and interests. That's something we should be proud of, not something that we try to limit.

Staff photo by Olivia Hoover
Students attend weekly quiz bowl practice on October 24th, 2018.

Is technology the Victorian fear of the telegraph, or a real threat?

Elizabeth Zhang
Columnist

Are we "millenials" and "young'uns" on our phones too much? Is our tech obsession making us antisocial, depressed and a whole lot dumber? There have been lots of studies conducted to test whether or not technology is ruining the younger generations, and most of the older folks I talk to seem to think it is.

I'm personally a grandmother in the body of a 16-year-old, mind you, so I'm not the most tech-savvy teen in the world. The only social media accounts I have are my email addresses and Facebook (and as far as Facebook knows, I'm a 55-year-old man). So, what really gets to me is when adults (ahem, teachers) simply assume that every student has Snapchat, Instagram and/or Twitter and that we all spend countless hours doing whatever on those apps? Websites? See, I don't even know how to use them or what you really do on them.

To adults making universalizing claims about the effects of social media on young people, I have to respectfully disagree. I guarantee you that there are plenty of young people like me who either don't have social media accounts or don't care about them.

But, fellow teenagers, we do have to consider the world from their perspectives too. If all you do in class is go on your phone, won't that make teachers think that you're so addicted that you just can't put it down? Yeah, maybe you're just bored, but would it really be that hard to wait 20 minutes until the bell rings, and then scroll through those posts?

If we don't pay attention in class, we might not pay attention to the people and events around us. But this is all double sided: Yes, technology and social media may distance us from the people who are close, but it moves us closer to the people who are distant.

When it comes to creating accounts for different social media sites, there are two approaches — pouring basically all your personal information on sites (birthday, age, where you live, where you go to school, etc.) or going incognito (like me, a 55-year-old man). A lot of weird, creepy people take advantage of the internet. We need to be careful about how much information we put online, who we follow, and how we present ourselves. No matter how invincible you feel, we are all vulnerable online. We should always take caution before we let strangers from the internet into our lives and we should pause before we believe what people say online.

To all the young people reading this, I hope you all strive to be tactful, careful, and creative with your use of social media. And to all the oldsters reading this - yes, the times they are a changin' (Ha! And you thought we didn't know Bob Dylan). Just like the printing press, electricity and the telegraph, social media has novel and terrifying ways to shrink the world. But just like those innovations were here to stay, so is social media. We have to recognize that our fear and distrust is futile, leaving the question: Where do we go from here?

The amount of waste produced at lunch is trash

Claire Pak
Columnist

With a total enrollment of around 2,200 students, the total trash production of Lexington High School rapidly accumulates. During daily lunches, numerous untouched fruits wrapped in plastic bags are simply tossed away along with meal trays that still hold heaps of food. Members of the LHS community need to cut down on trash production at lunches in order to reduce the school's negative impact on the environment.

A study shows that 80 million metric tons of carbon are produced by Massachusetts in just one year. This is equivalent to the weight of 266 full grown blue whales, one of the numerous species hurt by climate change. Trash production is partly to blame: landfills are a primary culprit of methane emission, while they also worsen habitat loss.

Last year at Jonas Clarke Middle School, a campaign known as Slash the Trash was initiated to decrease the total number of trash bags produced each lunch. Through composting and recycling, Clarke was able to lower the school's trash bag count by 50% within a month, decreasing from 14 bags to seven per day. At LHS, there is barely a composting system in place.

But we don't need sweeping campaigns or large structural changes to start decreasing our trash production. Encourage your friends to only take what they actually want to eat. It is better to go back and buy more food than to buy a surplus and throw away the leftovers. Consider choosing something biodegradable, like an unwrapped banana, rather than a plastic bag-wrapped apple.

We are on the right track. There is a National Honor Society initiative in the works that would make lunchtime composting an option. But it ultimately comes down to all of our abilities, as individuals, to hold ourselves accountable. So the next time you find yourself hovering over a trash can with something you know is recyclable, what will you do? Will you throw it away, and endure a half second of guilt before you forget it and move on? Or will you find a recycling bin, and feel just a little bit better?

Behind the Scenes: LHS cafeteria staff delivers daily nutrition

Daisy Li
Staff Writer
Pranathi Sriragam
Chief Writer

The Musket is starting a new series called Behind the Scenes, in which we profile individuals and groups who are integral to Lexington High School but who rarely receive attention or focus.

Starting at 6 a.m. on any given school day, the cafeteria staff works to prepare for the many students they will serve that day.

"We roughly have 16 people in the kitchen. One or two people are working on catering, but they're also working on other stuff because most of the workday is based around the student lunches," Matthew Lacombe, the Chef Manager, said.

Checking overall quality and food ordering is allocated to the higher managerial positions.

"I also deal with receiving all the food that comes into the place. Checking it, making sure it's of proper quality, and that … what they're delivering is right," Lacombe said.

Different staff members are responsible for the various menu options including nachos, sandwiches, burgers, and pizza, each of which must be prepared separately.

"I do the salad bowls, every day. I do preparations for nachos: sour cream, pico de gallo, guacamole, cheese," Maria Isabel Doprado, one of the cafeteria staff members, said.

As students, it can be easy to forget how much work goes into preparing school lunches. The staff ensures that the food is always of high quality.

"Everything you guys get is usually fresh every day. The vegetables are cut fresh; we don't get frozen vegetables in the high school. We make sure that everything goes right, every single day," Pierre Gerald "G" Bazile, one of two sous-chefs, said.

Although the job can be challenging, the cafeteria staff members collaborate and assist each other so that everyone can get their work done.

"Everybody is working in different parts of the job but we help each other. If I finish something early, I go and help the other ones. Everyone is kind," Marea Lugo, one of the cashiers, said.

The staff is grateful for the welcoming atmosphere.

"We have a nice team environment. I am happy when I go home," Doprado said.

The staff members also say that they enjoy working at the school because there is less pressure than in other working environments, and they have more time to spend with their families.

"I used to be the executive chef at a country club. Here it's easier, and less stressful. I used to never have time to spend with my kids but with the school I have that time," G said. "I don't have a lot of pressure, outside of the pressure I put on myself."

Many of the cafeteria staff members say that working with kids is their favorite part of the job. They enjoy interacting with students and listening to their stories.

"I was out for three days because I was sick and most of the kids came out and said they missed me, and it made me feel good because I'm like 'Okay, I'm doing something good,'" G said.

Overall, the staff believes its effort is not going to waste.

"You can't please everyone but we're doing a thousand a day and I would say 99% of the kids are really happy," Lacombe said.

The cafeteria staff continues to find new ways to make buying school lunch a better experience for the students, more recently with regard to efficiency.

"We just purchased a new program called Choosi. It's a program they use in California, and … it allows a student to have an app on their phone so if they don't want to wait in line, they'll be able to preorder on an app and make their own sandwich," Kevin Silvia, district manager for Whitsons Culinary Group, said.

Staff photo by Linda Kong
Cafeteria staff work hard every day with a positive attitude.

LHS Sources of Strength chapter repaints color wheel in the quad

Ilana Rosker
Varun Suraj
Staff Writers

On Oct. 5, Lexington High School's chapter of Sources of Strength, a national suicide prevention organization, repainted the quad's color wheel.

The wheel is split into eight colorful categories representing the core values of Sources of Strength: mental health, medical access, spirituality, generosity, healthy activities, mentors, positive friends and family support.

"Portraying ways to have sources of strength in your life to keep you happy and healthy, not just mentally, but overall, is what the painted quad is for. While the wheel isn't necessarily labeled or Sources of Strength specific, it reminds students of these categories," Lucas DiCerbo, a senior and one of the members of the LHS chapter of Sources of Strength, said.

Staff photo by Olivia Hoover
Students repainted the color wheel at the center of the quad.

DiCerbo wants LHS students to recognize positive support systems in their lives, and break down the stigma surrounding mental health issues.

"Too many people focus on negative sources of strength, but the positive ones are there if you look for them. If you're having a hard time, know that there are tons of resources out there, Sources of Strength being one of them, and don't hesitate to reach out if you need one of them," DiCerbo said.

The painted quad serves as a constant reminder for students to practice positivity in their lives.

"We want people to think about the eight wedges of the wheel," Rishi Gollerkeri, a senior and member of Sources of Strength, said. "We want to promote the idea that you need all those values to promote a healthy wellbeing and a healthy mind."

The event was publicized via Facebook. The LHS chapter of Sources wanted a large part of the LHS community to participate.

"There's no way that a group of 30 kids and a few adults can make everything happy, but if we can get everyone involved to participate in what we are doing, then we can promote a healthy being. That is the goal," Gollerkeri said.

The LHS chapter of Sources of Strength started in the fall of 2015. It was organized by Lexington Youth and Family Services, a group that promotes mental wellness.

Sources of Strength hopes to make repainting the quad an annual event.

"We try to organize fun events that center around people taking the time to be happy," DiCerbo said.

Asst. Professor from Emerson College speaks about political polling

Vani Sharma
Tony Sjodin
Staff Writers

During I Block on Wednesday, Oct. 17, Spencer Kimball, an Assistant Professor at Emerson College, spoke to Lexington High School students about the political polling process. The event catered to students studying statistics and government, but was open to any student interested.

Kimball discussed the idea of "polling literacy" and how journalists and the public often read polls incorrectly.

"That's why we come and speak to campuses, because we want you to be polling literate. We want you to be able to look at these results and have critical thoughts about what they really mean," Kimball said.

Kimball explained what steps pollsters take to design questions, collect responses and analyze data. At the end of the I Block, students asked him questions about his work.

"Seeing the relevance of what we are learning ... and the practical applications of it for predicting election outcomes, or for that matter predicting product launch and people's opinions, is what statistics is trying to teach students to be able to do," Christopher Doucette, a statistics teacher at LHS, said.

Kimball has visited LHS in previous years as one of the political speakers that Larry David, a U.S. Government and Politics teacher at LHS, has invited to speak to students.

"We've learned a lot about polling in AP Gov class, but I think the I Block really hit home the two main challenges that pollsters face: choosing a good sample and making an unbiased poll. Minute little details like the order of a poll's questions or the voice used to read the questions can have a large effect on a poll's data," David Arena, a senior who attended the I Block, said.

The 2016 election was among the topics discussed, including questions about how so many pollsters predicted the results incorrectly.

"One interesting thing I learned from the talk is that most polls are susceptible to 'herding,' where pollsters try to match their findings to previous results so they can seem more accurate. Perhaps this is why Trump's win came as such a surprise: pollsters initially predicted a Clinton victory, and most polls after that tried to lean towards Clinton to match," Arena said.

Kimball spoke about the margin of error in polling samples, and explained how collecting and analyzing data can affect the margin of error.

"I hope that students take away an interest for the variety and power of things that statistics can do. He's focusing in this example specifically on politics ... but the power of asking good questions and getting responses that are reflective of the population's attitude can give people an advantage in business, in politics, and lots of other situations," Doucette said.

LHS students give their thoughts on the recent ballot questions

Meher Khanna
Bryant Xia
Staff Writers

Three questions appeared on Massachusetts voters' ballots during the 2018 midterms. These questions dealt with healthcare, corporate influence and transgender discrimination. We surveyed LHS students about their opinions on the results of the election. Although many of the surveyed students are under the voting age, they are still aware of the ballot questions.

Question 1, which Mass. voted against, would have put a limit on the ratio of patients per nurse. Surveyed students disagreed with the Mass. decision.

"[The policy] would have helped nurses balance their personal and work lives and limit their stress," Nadia Ivanenko, a sophomore, said.

Others cited positive effects on patients.

"Less patients per nurse would make sure each patient is administered the amount of care and attention they need," Linda Kebichi, a sophomore, said.

However, others who initially supported the question acknowledged its drawbacks.

"[The policy] would have been implemented way too fast, in 2019, not giving enough time for hospitals to hire well-trained nurses," Larry Lin, a sophomore, said.

Question 2, on which Mass. voted "Yes," centered the issue of corporate rights. It will result in the creation of a commission to recommend a constitutional amendment to establish campaign finance regulation and overturn the Citizens United v. FEC Supreme Court decision that gave corporations personhood status.

Most surveyed students were happy with the "Yes" decision.

"Campaign contributions should be regulated because it creates a level playing field for candidates that don't all have an equal supply of money, as money often can buy power," Kebichi said.

Some students remained apathetic about Question 2.

"I am not very sure what the question asked and how it [will] affect me, or other citizens," Ivanenko said.

The third and final question concerned an existing piece of legislature that added gender identity to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in public locations. This legislation allows people to use restrooms consistent with their gender identities in places with separate areas for males and females, such as restrooms.

All of the surveyed students agreed with the "Yes" vote.

Some see gender identity as an issue that needs to be addressed in laws.

"Gender is just as much of a legitimate factor of identity as any of the other grounds [of discrimination]," Kebichi said.

Others noted the symbolic message this legislature contains.

"People of different gender identities should be accepted in society," Evern Arif, a sophomore, said.

Staff photo by Anya Ghali
Nadia Ivanenko, a sophomore that partook in the poll.

String groups perform together at the Fall String Celebration

Maia Hahn-Dupont
Manon LeDonne
Staff Writers

The Fall Strings Celebration took place on Tuesday, Oct. 16 at Lexington High School, showcasing the school's three string orchestras: Repertoire Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. Janet Haas and Rachel Jayson directed the ensembles.

The Repertoire Orchestra performed "The Game" by Brendan McBrien and "L'Estro Armonico" written by Vivaldi and J.S. Bach and arranged by Bob Lipton. The Symphony Orchestra, directed by Janet Haas, played "Adoro Te" by Mel Bonis and Mozart's Quintet No.4 in G minor. Finally, the Chamber Orchestra, directed by Rachel Jayson, performed all three movements of Edward Elgar's Serenade for Strings.

This concert encourages student musicians of different ages to perform for each other. Later in the year, the Winter Strings Concert will employ the same structure on a larger scale, with 4th through 12th grade musicians in the Lexington Public School system performing for each other.

"[The students] can learn the opportunities for growth in the high school program and build camaraderie between instruments, ages and ensembles," Haas said.

Combining multiple groups with varying ages and instruments allows for a rich musical experience for both the audience and the performers themselves.

"Hearing all three groups is a really interesting experience… each group has their own style and brings a different thing to the table," Nate White, a cellist in the Symphony Orchestra, said.

Junior Bryna Patel, a violinist in the Symphony Orchestra, also had thoughts about the nature of a three group performance.

"I thought it was really moving to hear all the great pieces that each group played, and I really appreciate [Lexington High School's] dedication to the arts, as the product is so beautiful," Patel said.

Don't wear mascara to A Star is Born

Clare Wiesen
News Editor

I walked into A Star is Born knowing very little about the movie or its history. Honestly, I saw a trailer for a movie with Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper and thought, "Why not?" I anticipated a movie theatre filled with other teen girls excited to see Lady Gaga belt it out on the big screen, but that wasn't the case. It appeared to be date night for many middle-aged couples, which was my first hint that I was not emotionally prepared for this movie.

That being said, I loved it.

Bradley Cooper plays the scruffy, alcoholic, rock country musician pretty spot on, and I never would have guessed that he had no experience with music prior to the movie. His vocals are good for a novice, but it's not surprising that the most popular songs from the movie's soundtrack are the ones sung by Lady Gaga.

Cooper deserves credit for both his acting and directing, but Lady Gaga is the true star of A Star is Born. We're used to seeing the public Lady Gaga, the woman with bleach blonde hair who wears meat like it's velvet. With her natural brown hair and minimal makeup, Gaga is unrecognizable as Ally, a young woman with an amazing but undiscovered voice.

The first section of the movie was full of cute, romcom type moments: singing in the parking lot of a grocery store late at night and a guitar string used as an impromptu engagement ring. The first part was so happy that I knew when the other shoe fell, it was going to fall hard. And man, was I right.

The second part was emotional to say the least. For people considering seeing the movie, know that it touches on subjects such as addiction and suicide. If people do see it in the theatre, I recommend bringing a box of tissues. A full box. And maybe an extra pack, just in case. Lady Gaga's vocals on "Shallow" and "Always Remember Us This Way" are enough to make me tear up, but the ending will leave anyone in touch with their emotions in a teary pool on the ground.

While I loved the film and would see it again once I have emotionally recovered, it has its faults. The second half of the movie is slow in some moments, such as during Cooper's philosophical moments. Gaga's character also wins awards for her music in a pivotal scene, which is questionable. I loved some of the songs that she sings throughout the film, but I'm not sure the lyric "Boy, could you please stop being so fine?" deserves a Grammy. While that song is definitely not my favorite, many other songs from the movie have already been added to my playlists.

A Star is Born feels familiar, maybe because the story has been told again and again, but also because it's real.

I'm very glad I went to see A Star is Born. Do I wish I had known a little more about the movie? Yes. Do I wish I had brought tissues? Yes. Do I wish I hadn't worn mascara? Very much, yes. If you're looking for a good cry that isn't about college or school or your own life, I would highly recommend this movie. If you just want to see a movie with Lady Gaga and can't handle uncontrollable sobbing in public, maybe just listen to the soundtrack for now.

The Big Bang Theory goes out with a bang

Narek Sahakian
A&E Editor

The Big Bang Theory is in its final season. After twelve years of laughs, the sitcom is coming full circle, returning to its original roots of comedy.

For those of you who have tuned out these past twelve years, a brief synopsis: The Big Bang Theory focuses on the life of brilliant but socially inept California Institute of Technology physicists and engineers: Leonard (Johnny Galecki), Sheldon (Jim Parsons), Raj (Kunal Nayyar) and Howard (Simon Helberg). The four may know everything about dark matter, but when it comes to women, they're stumped—a problem highlighted by beautiful aspiring actress Penny (Kaley Cuoco), whom Leonard falls desperately in love with.

Unlike most sitcoms, which use static personalities as a cheap source of humor, The Big Bang Theory documents twelve years of growth for each character. Sheldon's slow and at times forced transformation from a narcissistic, only-loved-by-his-mother workaholic to a caring husband is the backbone of the series, but we see the shift in priority from work to relationships and family not only with Sheldon, but with all of the characters.

The core of the story is mutual evolution, the idea that friends grow collectively. The often tedious two plot structure, in which a primary plot centers one relationship dynamic, and a subplot centers another, is used well this way. In each episode, the two subplots are united in a daily dinner of takeout food, when the characters come together.

Comedy is definitely the show's weakest element. The plot becomes predictable at times, and an episode may go by with only a chuckle.

The show is named after the scientific Big Bang Theory, which explores how the universe was first created from a single big explosion in space. Similar to how the Big Bang was the starting point for all of life, The Big Bang Theory not only shows the starting point of an unlikely friendship, but establishes the TV sitcom example for future shows to follow.

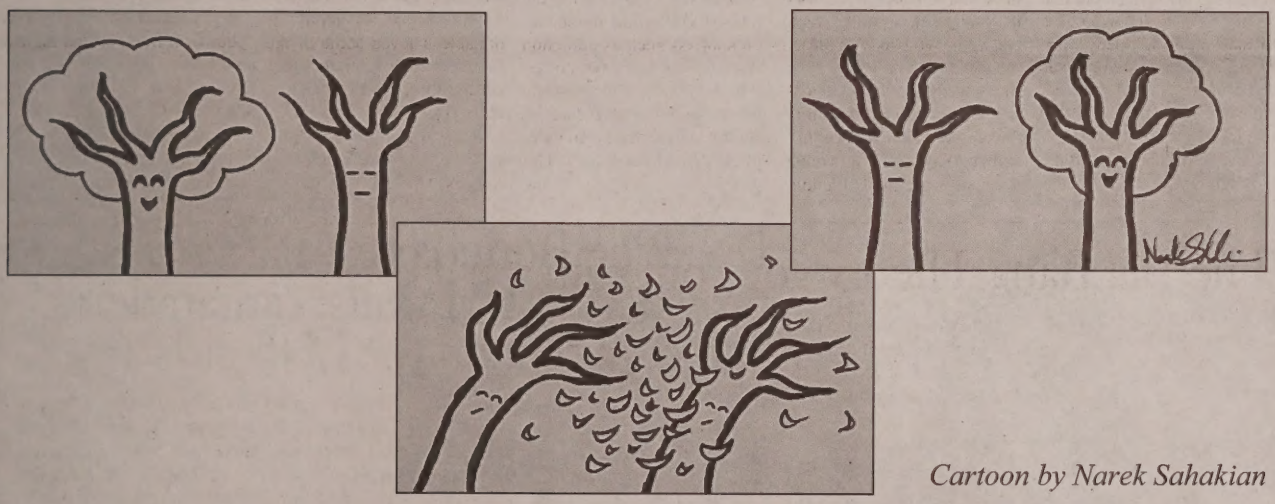
Rating 4/5

To read more, visit musketnews2.wixsite.com/lexmusket!

We are sure you will "fall" in love with this playlist!

1. "The Boys of Fall" - Kenny Chesney
2. "Rome" - Jessie Chris
3. "Happier" - Marshmello ft. Bastille
4. "One Number Away" - Luke Combs
5. "Trouble" - Avicii
6. "Save It for a Rainy Day" - Kenny Chesney
7. "Check Yes, Juliet" - We The Kings
8. "Thoughts About You" - Tim McGraw
9. "SICKO MODE" (Clean) - Travis Scott
10. "Livin' Part of Life" - Eric Church
11. "Best Day of My Life" - American Authors
12. "Living" - Dierks Bentley
13. "FourFiveSeconds" - Kanye West, Rihanna, Paul McCartney
14. "What Ifs" - Kane Brown, Lauren Alaina
15. "Glorious (feat. Skylar Grey)" - Macklemore, Skylar Grey
16. "Better" - Khalid
17. "Keeping Score (feat. Kelly Clarkson)" - Dan + Shay, Kelly Clarkson

Playlist by Brendan Cantwell



Cartoon by Narek Sahakian

You're in a good place with The Good Place

Talia Blatt
Editor-in-Chief
Allison Chaput
Emily Ma
Staff Writers

If you're someone who loves shrimp, utilitarianism, cliff hangers, nerdy humor or Kristen Bell, you'll love The Good Place. Actually, scratch that. Everyone should love The Good Place, a witty, metaphysical sitcom that premiered on NBC in September of 2016 to overwhelmingly positive reviews.

The show's third season is currently in the works, but to prevent spoilers, we'll focus on the first season. We meet the four main characters—Eleanor, Chidi, Tahani and Jianyu—right after they have all died.

Good news, they're in "The Good Place," a nondenominational heaven for people who lived primarily selfless lives. But minor spoiler alert—Eleanor is not supposed to be there. There's been a mistake and it's up to Chidi, an ethics professor and Eleanor's soulmate, to make Eleanor a better person so she isn't discovered by human-loving "Good Place" architect Michael and sent to the "Bad Place".

The Good Place will make you laugh, think and pay attention as it blazes through ethical dilemmas, twists and fast-paced word play. Rather than spin its wheels, The Good Place moves forward each episode, avoiding the "interesting premise" trap that seems to bamboozle other promising shows.

Some of the most interesting elements of the show originate from the post-mortem character development we witness the characters undergo. It is especially rewarding to watch Eleanor move from selfishness and frustration to understanding—a process made even more believable by Kristen Bell (Eleanor) and William Jackson Harper (Chidi), compelling actors with phenomenal chemistry. And even Janet, an all knowing non-human non-robot non-girl database, is given the ability to develop empathy and compassion.

Although the humor is occasionally raunchy and the pacing can get off-balance, The Good Place is what we all need right now: an uplifting comedy to remind us that humans are quirky, clever, kind and endlessly capable of self improvement. Each episode will leave you with a smile, and a question: "What the fork just happened?"

Athlete of the Issue: LHS boasts highly successful fencer

Christina Li
Chief Writer
Sarah Liu
Staff Writer

Lexington Compliments is a social media platform at Lexington High School that strives to spread positivity. They recently posted about Emme Zhou, a senior. She was describeld as a "fencing LEGEND" and a "goddess."

Emme Zhou, captain of the Lexington Fencing Club, is an internationally ranked fencer. She started at the age of nine, and has been fencing for eight years.

Time commitment is necessary for any sport, and fencing is no exception. For Zhou, fencing requires hours of training every week, and many missed days of school for travel. Initially, the level of commitment was difficult to manage.

"It used to be very stressful to have to train and travel so much, but now I think I've learned to balance my mental health, friends, school work and other activities pretty well," Zhou said.

Zhou describes the time she has invested in the sport as rewarding. She has been among the top five fencers in her age group nationally for the past three years, and is a regular attendee of international competitions.

Along with the high rankings she has achieved, the activity has brought emotional fulfillment. Her experience in the sport makes her a valuable mentor for younger fencers, and she enjoys teaching them. As a captain, she strives towards making the community tight-knit and supportive, citing time spent with her team as some of her best experiences in the sport.

"I love working hard with my teammates and improving together. A really meaningful memory that I have as a fencer is traveling to Europe for the first time for a tournament with the US team. We cheered each other on and it really felt like a cohesive team, which I really enjoyed," Zhou said.

While the sport has been gratifying for Zhou, the demanding and highly competitive lifestyle has created challenges for her along the way. Nevertheless, she has persisted.

"It's really frustrating when you haven't done well in a while, but I always remember that nothing comes easy. Perseverance is actually the key," Zhou said.

The many ups and downs of fencing in Zhou's life through the years have helped her gain valuable insight into her capabilities not only an athlete, but as a person.

"One strength that I learned throughout the years was to have a strong mindset. When I was young, I used to freak out if I was losing. Now I can remain calm and have a clear mind when I'm fencing. This has also made me more calm and collected when I face difficult situations outside of fencing," Zhou said.

Staff photos by Matt Pearlman
Emme Zhou is an internationally ranked fencer.

Varsity field hockey team finishes a successful season

Athena Li
Staff Writer

Since the fall sports season began in September, the Lexington High School girls' varsity field hockey team has been busy with their game-filled schedule, playing against 20 other schools over a span of two and a half months.

Members practice around two hours a day for six days every week. Players are often seen doing their homework after a game, before returning home in the late evening.

"I think we have a really great team dynamic this year," Bess Lawrence, a senior and member of the varsity field hockey team, said. "The majority of us have played with each other for a while now, so we've gotten to know one another well. Everyone is super supportive of each other, which I think helps us be more cohesive on the field."

One activity the team does is called "pump-up buddies". Each member is assigned another member, whom they then surprise with snacks and an encouraging note before the start of a game. This not only helps boost the players' morale, but it also fosters friendships within the team.

"We have talked a lot about having grit and working hard for 60 minutes each day we compete", Coach Laura Galopim said. "At this point in the season they are showing that they can be a tough team to beat when it all comes together."

The varsity field hockey team has already played against 14 other schools around Massachusetts. The current record stands at 13 wins, two ties and two losses. The last couple games were a win against Methuen and a loss to Chelmsford.

Seniors leaving the team are Felice Brennan, Carly Briggs, Eva Crimmins-Perhanidis, Bess Lawrence, Janna Lee, Abbie Ortyl, Cate Swan and Zoe Toulmin.

Staff photos by Shweta Kondapi
Khushi Soni is the programming captain for Parity Bits.

Breaking Boundaries: Parity Bits provides STEM skills, camaraderie and competition for LHS girls

Jyothsna Bolleddula
Features Editor
Rachel Zhang
Staff Writer

Of the many clubs and teams Lexington High School has to offer, the Parity Bits robotics team is one that plays a major role in many students' lives. Established in 2014, Parity Bits is the school's first and only all-female robotics team. The team is currently in its fifth season.

For Khushi Soni, a senior and one of the captains of the team, the LHS Parity Bits robotics team has been an integral part of her high school experience.

"In a way, it has defined my experience at school. I've met some of my closest friends through this team, and made some of the best—and most embarrassing—memories," Soni said.

The robotics team has helped its members feel welcome and accepted through its encouraging environment. This has created a close-knit, trusting community.

"[Our] friendship also extends beyond the club, so we are not just a team on the field, but we are a team 24/7," Anushka Pachaury, a junior and member of the team, said.

Science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields still see a huge gender gap, and the drop-off in girls' participation tends to start in middle and high school. LHS is in no way immune to that culture of misogyny and exclusion, but the Parity Bits is making strides forward.

"In an all-girls team, we have each other's backs and it allows us to express our true [selves] without anything limiting our intellectual capabilities," Pachaury said.

Robotics necessitates persistence. Soni describes this as one of the many lessons she has learned as a result of her experience.

"Robotics includes a lot of trial and error because not all designs work, and programming is basically just trying again and again till you finally get it, so I know how to handle failure," Soni said.

The robotics team provides students with a fun and creative opportunity to pursue their interests in STEM while enhancing their programming and building skills. Students who join come with a wide range of experience: in fact, students with little to no STEM experience can still make significant contributions to the team.

"Anyone who is not necessarily interested in STEM can still have a major impact on our team, whether it be with the notebook—how we document our year's progress—or by being a photographer, or running our social media. There is something for everyone," Soni said.

The Parity Bits meet around four times a week, with each meeting going until 5 p.m., sometimes even later.

"We work really hard, but at the same time we have a lot of fun," Pachaury said.

The academic skills robotics team members garner spill into class, particularly in STEM courses such as AP Computer Science. For Soni and Pachaury, the robotics team has opened doors to technology workshops and hackathons.

The team is currently preparing for its annual competition, the FIRST Tech Challenge qualifier.